

Oprah Winfrey, T.V. Host and Actress



It doesn't matter who you are, where you come from. The ability to triumph begins with you - always.

1 From the time Oprah Winfrey was a little girl, she knew that she wanted to talk to people. It was her favorite thing to do. In fact, she often gave speeches to the animals on her Grandmother's property.

2 Oprah was born in Mississippi. She was raised by her grandmother until she was six years old. Oprah was a very smart little girl. Her grandmother taught her to read when she was 2 ½ years old. She only spent a day in kindergarten before she was promoted to first grade. By the end of first grade, she was promoted to third grade.

3 Oprah moved around a lot as a child. She moved to Milwaukee when she was six to live with her mother. Then when she was twelve she moved to Tennessee to live with her father. He encouraged her to work hard in school. Each night before she had dinner, she had to tell her father the meaning of five new words that she had learned during the day.

4 Her hard work paid off and Oprah earned a full scholarship from Tennessee State University. In 1976, she graduated with a degree in speech communications and performing arts.

5 Oprah knew she wanted to work in television. Her first job after graduating college was for the ABC station in Baltimore, Maryland. She was a reporter and co-anchor. While she enjoyed being a reporter, she wanted to get to know the people behind the stories she was covering. She felt that being a talk show host would be a better fit for her. In 1978, she left reporting and became a co-host for a show called *People Are Talking*.

6 In 1984, Oprah moved to Chicago, Illinois. She became the host of a local show, *AM Chicago*. Oprah was a hit with viewers and the following year the show became syndicated.

This meant that television stations around the United States would broadcast the show. The show was renamed *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. The show would be on the air until 2011.

7 Reading has always been important to Oprah. In 1996, she started the first on-air book club. She would select a book for her viewers to read and then discuss it on a later show. The books she picked became national best sellers because so many people read the books she recommended. In 2000, Oprah started her own magazine called *O, The Oprah Magazine*.

8 Oprah is also an actress. She has been in several movies and television shows. She received an Oscar nomination in 1985 for best supporting actress.

9 Oprah has created several companies. In 1986 she created a television production company called Harpo Productions, Inc. Then in 1990 she started a film production company called Harpo Films. In 1998 she helped start a cable television company for women called Oxygen.

10 Oprah has earned a lot of money during her career. In fact, she was the first Black female billionaire. She has used this money to help others. In 1987 she formed the Oprah Winfrey Foundation. This organization provides money to groups that help needy families, women, and children. In 1998 she started Oprah's Angel Network. The network has raised over \$50 million. This organization has built 60 schools and replaced homes that were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. She has also opened a school for children in South Africa.

11 Oprah has won many awards. In 2013 she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2018 she won a Golden Globe for Lifetime Achievement.

Name: _____

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1. How did Oprah's degree in performing arts help her when she left college?

2. How do you know that Oprah cares about helping others?

3. Summarize the passage in 3-5 sentences.

4. In your opinion, what is Oprah's biggest achievement? Support your reason.
